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**INFORMATION SHEET****FY19 COALITION ASSESSMENT GRANT PROPOSAL, EPA BROWNFIELDS PROGRAM**

1. Applicant Identification  
River Valley Regional Commission  
710 Front Avenue, Suite A  
Columbus, GA 31901  
DUNS ID: 151 014 602 000
2. Funding Requested
  - a. Assessment Grant Type: Coalition
  - b. Federal Funds Requested:
    - i. Requested amount: \$600,000
    - ii. Site-specific Assessment Grant Waiver: *Not applicable*
  - c. Contamination: \$352,956 hazardous substances;  
\$247,044 petroleum
3. Location  
Southwestern Georgia. Our Target Area is the counties of Crisp, Dooly, Macon, and Sumter.
4. Property Information for Site-specific Proposals  
*Not applicable*
5. Contacts
  - a. Project Director  
Name: Jim Livingston  
Title: Community Development Director  
Phone Number: 706-256-2910  
Email Address: [jlivingston@rivervalleyrc.org](mailto:jlivingston@rivervalleyrc.org)  
Mailing Address: 710 Front Ave., Suite A, Columbus, GA 31901
  - b. Chief Executive  
Name: Patricia Cullen  
Title: Executive Director  
Phone Number: 706-256-2910  
Email Address: [pcullen@rivervalleyrc.org](mailto:pcullen@rivervalleyrc.org)  
Mailing Address: 710 Front Ave, Suite A, Columbus, GA 31901

Chattahoochee | Clay | Crisp | Dooly | Harris | Macon | Marion | Muscogee  
Quitman | Randolph | Schley | Stewart | Sumter | Talbot | Taylor | Webster

Equal Opportunity Employer

6. Population

RVRC Service Area (applicant): 377,661  
Crisp County (coalition member): 23,439  
City of Vienna (coalition member): 4,011  
Macon County (coalition member): 14,740  
Sumter County (coalition member): 32,819  
Ideal, GA (Priority Site location): 470  
Cordele, GA (Priority Site location): 10,726  
Americus, GA (Priority Site location): 15,400  
Montezuma, GA (Priority Site location): 3,078  
Wenona, GA (Priority Site location): < 1,000

7. Other Factors Checklist

Community population is 10,000 or less.	Pg. 1, 5,6
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian tribe or United States territory.	Not Applicable
The priority brownfield site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	Not Applicable
The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the priority site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water, or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them).	Pg. 2,3
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	Pg. 2,3
The redevelopment of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy; or any energy efficiency improvement projects.	Not Applicable

8. Letters from State and Tribal Environmental Authorities

A letter from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) is attached to this Information Sheet.

**Richard E. Dunn, Director**

**Land Protection Branch**  
2 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive  
Suite 1054, East Tower  
Atlanta, Georgia 30334  
404-657-8600

January 25, 2019

**VIA ELECTRONIC Mail** [jlivingston@riversvalleyrc.org](mailto:jlivingston@riversvalleyrc.org)

Mr. Jim Livingston  
Community and Economic Development Director  
River Valley Regional Commission  
P.O. Box 1908  
Columbus, Georgia 31902

RE: State Acknowledgement Letter – Brownfield Community -Wide Assessment Grant Application  
River Valley Regional Commission

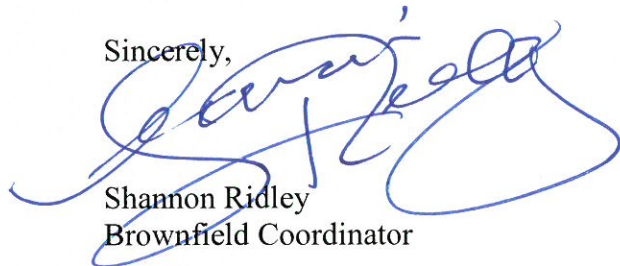
Dear Mr. Livingston:

This letter serves as acknowledgement from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (“GA EPD”) that the River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC) will be submitting an application to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) for funding assistance under the Federal Community-Wide Assessment Grant Program to conduct assessment activities. GA EPD understands that the RVRC, on behalf of its coalition members, is applying for \$600,000 to be used for both hazardous substances and petroleum contamination within the targeted communities located in Sumter, Macon, Dooly, and Crisp counties.

The RVRC is comprised of a brownfield coalition serving Sumter, Macon, Dooly, and Crisp counties. The coalition consists of members from RVRC, Sumter County, the City of Vienna, Macon County, and the Cordele-Crisp Industrial Development Council.

GA EPD would like to take this opportunity to encourage EPA’s positive decision in making a grant award to the RVRC for such assessment. A successful award would greatly assist this community in its redevelopment efforts. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Shannon Ridley  
Brownfield Coordinator

cc: Nick Diluzio, Project Scientist, Newfields

File: FFY 2019 EPA Grant Applicants, River Valley Regional Commission-Assessment

**1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION**

**a. Target Area and Brownfields**

**i. Background and Description of Target Area**

The River Valley Regional Commission and our Brownfield Coalition partners<sup>1</sup> request \$600,000 in assessment grant funds to investigate brownfields sites in Crisp, Dooly, Macon, and Sumter counties in rural middle Georgia. These counties are the focus of this Brownfield Assessment application and will serve as the coalition target area. is the birthplace of the “peanut farmer President”, Jimmy Carter, contains one of the largest Confederate military prisons used during the Civil War, where over 45,000 Union soldiers were confined and nearly 13,000 died, and includes some of the most productive agricultural lands in the state interspersed with small, historic, southern agricultural communities. Macon County ranks first in the state for peach and dairy production, Dooly County is number one for cotton production, Crisp County ranks second in watermelon production, and Sumter County is third for soybean production (2014 GA Farm Gate Value Report). While the target area has a strong agricultural tradition, rich Civil War history, and a number of tourist attractions, the region is suffering from **blight, high levels of poverty, low income, and low levels of education**. The area has a high minority population. Demographic challenges of the target area were exacerbated by the 2008 recession, with plant closures in each of the four counties. **The greater River Valley region has lost 53% of its manufacturing jobs between 2000 and 2017** (RVRC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy - CEDS). Levels of vacant housing in the target area exceed the state average, ranging from 14.5% in Sumter County to 24% in Macon County, nearly double the state-wide average of 12.9%. In addition to high vacancy rates, the number of mobile homes in the target area far exceeds the statewide average. In the target area, between 16.6% (Sumter County) and 28.7% (Macon County) of the housing units are mobile homes, versus a state-wide average of 9.1%.

Communities in the target area can be broken out into two tiers- the employment centers of Americus, Cordele, and Vienna, and the very small rural farming towns that dot the agricultural countryside. Americus is the largest city in the target area (pop. 15,400), followed by Cordele (pop. 10,726), and both cities have healthcare and higher education services not found elsewhere in these four counties. Americus has a vibrant downtown core and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Cordele’s downtown core is also listed on the National Register but is suffering from a high level of blight. Both cities have an industrial economy, however they both have several abandoned and underutilized industrial properties. The City of Vienna has a large Tyson Foods plant, which announced a \$110 million expansion in 2015 and the creation of an additional 500 jobs. Unfortunately, Vienna has a housing shortage and most of the Tyson employees live outside of the county. The city has targeted redevelopment of brownfields into affordable housing. Last year, a private developer purchased the former RedKap manufacturing building (a priority site in past applications) for redevelopment into affordable housing. While this is a great start, funds are needed to assess additional sites in the area to spur private development.

Outside of Americus, Cordele, and Vienna, the remainder of the target area is characterized by very small, rural farming towns (populations less than 1,000 people), which often suffer from extreme blight. In very small communities such as Ideal (pop. 470), most of the commercial buildings in the community are vacant and blighted. These very small towns have few jobs, minimal tax base, and are barely surviving economically. The residents that have stayed in these very small towns struggle to

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<sup>1</sup> Coalition partners: Sumter County Development Authority (also known as Americus-Sumter Payroll Development Authority), City of Vienna, Cordele-Crisp Industrial Development Council, Macon County Development Authority

## **RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION: BROWNFIELDS COALITION ASSESSMENT GRANT PROPOSAL, FY 2019**

preserve their community, and the local governments cannot afford to inherit any environmental liabilities from these blighted properties without a clear estimate of remediation costs and funding sources to accomplish cleanup. Agro-tourism is increasing in the region, and each of the Target Area counties host large annual festivals that bring thousands of attendees to the region. Conducting building materials assessments and quantifying sub-surface liabilities at these properties will facilitate demolition or re-development of such properties to keep these communities alive and allow them to capitalize on visitors to the region.

The Brownfields assessment project of the River Valley Brownfields Coalition has two primary objectives. In the employment centers, assessments will focus on business expansion by assessing and re-developing former industrial properties. In the small rural farming towns throughout the target area, the coalition will work with and assist local governments to remove blight and quantify environmental liabilities, facilitating demolition and/or redevelopment. When viewed individually, coalition members do not have the capacity or resources to manage brownfield projects on their own. However, as members of a coalition coupled with the excellent project and grant management capabilities of the RVRC, coalition members will be empowered to address brownfields and blight within their communities.

### **ii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Sites**

The 2018-2023 RVRC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) report lists vacant main streets/town centers as a primary economic threat for the target area. Brownfields in the target area can generally be split into two categories: vacant and blighted buildings in small rural farming towns, and vacant industrial properties on the edges of employment centers. Coalition members have identified more than 20 brownfields sites in all four counties of the target area. With the assessment grant, we will first address six priority sites ranging from a former school with asbestos adjacent to a park to one of the largest vacant manufacturing buildings in the region. As many additional inventoried sites will be assessed as possible as funding allows, ensuring sites in all four counties are addressed.

Site Name	Past Land Use / Current Site Conditions	Environmental Concerns	Proposed Redevelopment
Ideal School* - Ideal, GA	Former school building / Currently vacant/collapsing	Asbestos (confirmed); Lead	Remove blight, expand adjacent park or potential residential development
Allied Department Store – Cordele, GA	Department store (1908-1980s)/ Currently vacant	Asbestos, Lead	Café or coffee shop to support adjacent university campus
Former Davidson Wheel Trim Factory – Americus, GA	Plastics molding and painting for automotive parts	Fuels, chemicals (solvents)	Industrial manufacturing facility
Montezuma Motors* - Montezuma, GA	Car dealership and service center (1950-1990s)/ Currently vacant and blighted	Fuels, oils, solvents; lead, asbestos	Remove blight; commercial/retail along central downtown street
Vacant gas station in Gillespie-Selden (Cordele) Historic District	Gas station/ Currently vacant	Fuels, oils, lead, asbestos	Demolish building for re-development into retail space.
Former Perlis Truck Stop – Wenona, GA	Former large truck stop/travel center property along I-75	Fuels, oils, solvents, lead, asbestos	Re-develop into support services for travelers along busy I-75 corridor.

**Notes:**\* Property located within FEMA 100-year flood plain

The former Ideal School is located next to a large park, is immediately adjacent to several residential properties, is located in a federally-designated FEMA 100-year flood plain, and poses a **significant health and safety risk** to nearby residents and visitors to the park as asbestos has been confirmed at the site. The former Allied department store in Cordele is directly across the street from Albany State University - Cordele. The Allied department store is identified as a priority site due to its high-traffic and high-visibility location, a perceived low level of difficulty to assess and re-develop the

building, and the immediate impact of redevelopment on the community based on its proximity to the Albany State campus. Montezuma Motors is a former car dealership and service center located at the entrance to their downtown. This site has been identified as a priority site due to the site's high visibility and the **public health and safety risk** due to the building that is currently vacant and is **beginning to collapse**. A vacant gasoline station is on the edge of the Gillespie-Selden (G-S) Historic District in Cordele and within the G-S Urban Redevelopment Area. The G-S neighborhood is suffering from a high level of blight, and RVRC has invested significant time and resources into revitalizing this neighborhood through the development of an Urban Redevelopment Plan in 2011, the receipt of a Housing Preservation Grant from USDA Rural Development, and three HUD CDBG projects totaling \$1.5 million. Re-developing this gas station will remove a blighted building from the neighborhood and a busy community corridor and bring much needed business to this underserved rural community.

Brownfield properties in industrial zones outside of town centers represent highly underutilized land. These properties often span several acres, are proximal to rail spurs or major highways, and have the highest potential for commercial re-development. The Perlis truck stop in Wenona opened in 1971 and was once a nationally known truck stop along I-75. The property is now abandoned, and the property owners do not have the resources to conduct an assessment on the site. Given the property's high-visibility location along I-75, this site has been identified as a priority site for re-development. The former Davidson Wheel Trim factory is a 215,000 square foot manufacturing building that is currently vacant. This is **one of the largest manufacturing facilities in the region** and will result in a significant number of additional jobs (potentially between 50-100) if re-developed. Two businesses have moved into adjacent buildings, but the main plant building remains vacant due to brownfields concerns. Additionally, the Davidson Wheel Trim factory property is **adjacent to Mill Creek**, a tributary to Muckalee Creek and eventually the Flint River. The existing condition of the building could have a detrimental environmental impact on the watershed.

## **b. Revitalization of the Target Area**

### **i. Redevelopment Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans**

The assessment grant will be used as a tool to meet the redevelopment goals adopted in the **Regional Economic Development plan**, which highlights brownfield redevelopment as "the greatest opportunity for infill development in the River Valley region." All priority sites have potential environmental concerns that are inhibiting use or demolition. Through environmental assessment and site-specific risk screening, these properties can be cleared for development or redevelopment.

Additionally, each county has a county-wide comprehensive plan that focuses on re-development. The **Greater Macon County Comprehensive Plan** for 2017-2026 identifies the demolition of the former Ideal School as an "implementation measure" to facilitate revitalization of the surrounding neighborhood. In Cordele, the Allied Department Store is directly across the street from the new Albany State University-Cordele, which opened in January 2015. The building has a stately, historic brick façade, but is currently vacant and contributing to the widespread blight throughout downtown Cordele. Assessing this property will facilitate re-development into a possible coffee shop or café to support the college, while also reducing blight, preserving the historic character of the building, and increasing the tax base of the community, all of which are goals and objectives outlined in the **2009 Greater Crisp County Comprehensive Plan**.

### **ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Redevelopment Strategy**

Re-development of the former Ideal School property will increase the size of the adjacent park by approximately 1.5 acres while removing a significant health and safety threat to the community. Re-development of the former Allied department store in Cordele will result in the creation of 5-10

additional jobs while also increasing sales tax and property tax revenue. Currently, the Allied store property is owned by the Cordele Downtown Development Authority and no property taxes are collected on the property. If the property is re-developed, the property would generate at minimum \$2,500 a year in property tax. Assessment and re-development of the former Davidson Wheel Trim facility in Americus would result in a significant addition of much needed jobs in the region, potentially up to 100 new jobs, depending on the type of operation. Demolition of the Montezuma Motors, and the vacant gas station will all serve to remove blight on highly travelled corridors and eliminate current risks to public health and safety. Demolition of the Montezuma Motors building will also serve to enhance the aesthetic of historic downtown Montezuma, as that is the first building people see when entering downtown from the south.

**c. Strategy for Leveraging Resources**

**i. Resources Needed for Site Reuse**

Since the Lower Chattahoochee and Middle Flint Regional Development Centers were established in 1961 and later merged to create the RVRC in 2009, lasting partnerships have been built with organizations working to promote the economic stability of the region for the past 55 years. These organizations include USDA Rural Development, the US Department for Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Georgia Department of Community Affairs, GA EPD, the GA Environmental Finance Authority, and local public health agencies throughout our service area. The coalition will work closely with these organizations to identify ways brownfield redevelopment can help the area meet its economic development goals.

HUD Community Development Block Grants, which are applied for by individual communities and administered by RVRC, are being utilized in all four counties of the target area to improve infrastructure. While these funds cannot be used for assessment activities, they can be used in conjunction with Brownfields funds to spur redevelopment within the target area. Brownfields funds to address blighted buildings, in conjunction with the CDBG funds, would allow for significant improvements to target area communities. Grants have been awarded to Marshallville, Vienna, Cordele, and Montezuma in 2015, 2016, and 2017.

Tax incentives from the Georgia Brownfields program can be leveraged with assessment funds. Following assessment, purchasers or developers can enroll brownfield properties in the state brownfields program, receive additional liability protections, and receive a tax credit for qualified costs spent on the brownfield property, including assessment costs. Following completion of the assessments, the developer of the Allied Department Store or the Perlis Truck Stop properties could enroll the sites in the state brownfields program and recoup any funds they spend on assessment and cleanup through property tax credits. Additionally, Historic Preservation Tax Credits can be pursued for the former Allied Department Store and other properties.

**ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure**

All priority brownfields sites are located on existing roads and several properties are located along existing rail lines. Additionally, many properties already have existing water and sewer access. This infrastructure will be utilized in re-development. Many brownfield sites are located within the town centers of Americus, Vienna, and Cordele, allowing them easy access to natural gas, electricity, telephone/internet, and other services needed to support redevelopment. As an example, the former Davidson Exterior Trim manufacturing facility currently has all the utilities and infrastructure in place to redevelop and reopen the facility, including direct rail access.

## **2. COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

### **a. Community Need**

#### **i. The Community's Need for Funding**

Target area communities are rural and need assessment funds because they do not have the financial capability to address contamination of priority sites through voluntary environmental due diligence. Most communities in the target area are very small (<1,000 people) and have a limited ability to raise revenue through taxes to assess or clean up property. Demands for funds are especially high because of the **high poverty rate (31.9%) and low per capita income (\$12,788 less than national average)** in the target area and prevalence of people who need multiple types of assistance. Additionally, every county in the target area has experienced plant closures and layoffs. In Vienna, two Georgia Pacific Plants closed resulting in the loss of approximately 200 jobs. In 2008, the Evergreen composite facility in Montezuma closed, and approximately 100 employees were laid off. Also in 2008, the Lasco Bathware facility in Cordele closed, resulting in the loss of several hundred jobs. In 2014, the Allen's Foods plant in Montezuma closed, resulting in the loss of approximately 200 jobs. In 2010, Cooper Lighting in Americus announced it would lay off a large portion of its 550-person workforce over a two year period. Since 2000, the region has lost 53% of its manufacturing jobs. Grant funds will allow currently vacant industrial facilities to be assessed and re-developed, creating job opportunities for these economically depressed areas.

In October 2018, Hurricane Michael tore through the core of the Target Area. The hurricane caused more than **\$2 billion in losses** to the state's agriculture industry. In Crisp County, the cotton and peanut crops were hit especially hard. Damage estimates to the cotton crop alone are estimated to be between \$550 to \$600 million (GA Dept. of Agriculture). For the Target Area counties, which rely heavily on agriculture, impacts from this storm will be felt for many years to come. Brownfield grant funds will help to alleviate some of the financial burden of the storm recovery.

#### **ii. Threats to Sensitive Populations**

Site assessment and potential clean-up has direct health benefits by reducing human and ecological exposure to contaminants. EPA's 2015 report "Building Vibrant Communities: Community Benefits of Land Revitalization" identifies numerous benefits of brownfield revitalization, including the removal of blight, access to exercise, improved physical and mental health, and improving the feel of communities. Many of the proposed sites to be assessed, including the former Ideal School (which is located adjacent to a park where children play), are weed-infested eye sores located adjacent to residential development. **The old school building is an attractant for kids and trespassers who are potentially being exposed to asbestos, lead-based paint, and other unknown contaminants.** Demolishing the old school could allow for the expansion of the park adjacent to the school building, and enhance welfare, environmental, and public health benefits for the community. Assessment funding will allow sites like the Ideal school to be assessed and redeveloped, thus eliminating exposure to potential contaminants and enhancing environmental justice in Macon County.

In 2014, **lead poisoning incidence rates** for children 6 years and under in all four counties within the target area **exceeded the state average** of 2.6 cases per 100. In Macon County, the rate was 7.0, nearly three times greater than the state average. In 2015, the lead poisoning rate for Dooly County 7.1. Children less than 4 years old also have **higher-than-normal rates of asthma** in the Target Area compared to the rest of the state. In 2015, the asthma-related hospital discharge incidence rate in Macon County was 8.6 cases per 1,000 - over 6 times greater than the state incidence rate of 1.4 per 1,000.



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The population within the target area also suffers from higher than normal incidence of cancer, especially Crisp County. Between 2011-2015, **Crisp County had higher-than-normal rates of breast, prostate, lung, colon, uterine, bladder, and kidney cancer when compared to the rest of the state.** Macon County also had higher than normal rates of lung, colon, and kidney cancers relative to the rest of the state. Assessment of brownfield sites will facilitate cleanup of the sites and therefore reduce exposures to carcinogens such as benzene at petroleum sites.

In many of very small rural towns, the social benefits realized through brownfields revitalization are very tangible. Unlike large cities, the revitalization of just one property located on Main Street in Ideal, DeSoto, Leslie, or Arabi (all with populations less than 600) can have a lasting social benefit by returning properties to productive use and increasing the welfare of residents and provide these communities a sense of wellbeing. Brownfields in this rural target area pose more than health risks. They degrade the quality of life and general welfare of the communities. Their sense of abandonment permeates the target area and depresses the wellbeing of those living near these sites, representing a sense of lost opportunity.

### **c. Community Engagement**

#### **i. Community Involvement**

Example local community partners are listed below. The RVRC routinely interfaces with private, state, and non-profit groups, and coalition members are highly active within their respective communities. The community partners listed in the table below will be involved in decisions about where assessments should be focused, what land use cleanup planning should be directed toward, and what the best redevelopment potential is for priority sites. Partners from all four target area counties will be involved in the project.

Partner Name	County	Point of Contact	Role in the Project
Flint Riverkeeper	All	Gordon Rogers, 229-435-2241, <a href="mailto:gordon@flintriverkeeper.com">gordon@flintriverkeeper.com</a>	Advocates for green development within floodplains that can foster groundwater recharge/infiltration
Cordele-Crisp Chamber of Commerce	Crisp	Monica Simmons, 229-273-1668, <a href="mailto:msimmons@cordele-crisp-chamber.com">msimmons@cordele-crisp-chamber.com</a>	Conducts outreach to local property owners; advocate for re-development in the target area; distribute news and updates to their members
Dooly County Chamber of Commerce	Dooly	Rhonda Lamb-Heath, 229-268-8275, <a href="mailto:rhonda@bigpigjig.com">rhonda@bigpigjig.com</a>	Conducts outreach to local property owners; advocate for re-development in the target area; distributes news and updates to their members
Albany State University	Crisp	Traci Griffen, 229-276-2589, <a href="mailto:traci.griffen@asurams.edu">traci.griffen@asurams.edu</a>	Advocates for business redevelopment in downtown Cordele to serve their students and faculty; provide meeting space
Habitat for Humanity	Dooly	Bamble Hayes, 229-271-8000, <a href="mailto:crispareaahabitat@gmail.com">crispareaahabitat@gmail.com</a>	Advocates for affordable housing
Vienna Main Street	Dooly	Janet Joiner, 229-268-4920	Distributes program news and updates, identify sites for redevelopment
Americus-Sumter Land Bank	Sumter	Paula Martin, 229-389-3667, <a href="mailto:aslb@americusga.gov">aslb@americusga.gov</a>	Works with local property owners to advocate for the re-development of brownfield properties to remove blight.
Macon County Kiwanis	Macon	Gerald Beckum, 478-472-2391, <a href="mailto:geraldbeckum@windstream.net">geraldbeckum@windstream.net</a>	Distribute news and updates to their members and encourage active engagement in the project

#### **ii. Incorporating Community Input**

Input from the community will be incorporated throughout the lifecycle of the project. Coalition members have partnered with residents and communities in the past, and will continue to partner with local civic and non-profit organizations to solicit community input on the project. During community meetings held throughout the target area, coalition representatives will keep a record of input received from community members, and surveys/questionnaires will be provide as needed to collect input on sites to assess and potential redevelopment strategies. In addition to community meetings, Facebook, email, and a website will be utilized to collect input from community members who may not

be able to attend an in-person meeting. All input received from all communication channels will be logged in a single project database. Prior to each meeting of coalition members, all input received to date will be compiled and distributed to all coalition members to be used in the decision making, whether that be determining sites to be assessed or redevelopment planning for assessed sites.

### **3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS**

#### **a. Description of Tasks and Activities**

Paragraphs below describe the tasks that will be completed by each key entity on the project. Proposed schedule and milestones are at the end of this section.

Task 1: Program Management (RVRC responsibility) – Activities will include selection of a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP), completing eligibility questionnaires and quarterly reports, entering information into ACRES, and coordinating with EPA. RVRC will also facilitate meetings with Coalition members on proposed assessment activities and selection of additional sites from the inventory.

Task 2: Community Outreach (Coalition responsibility, with materials prepared by QEP) – Activities will include preparing educational fact sheets and presentation materials (done by QEP), presenting status of grant funded work to the RVRC Commission annually, presenting draft SAPs and cleanup plans in-person to the applicable local council, updating the RVRC web page to discuss Brownfields, sending quarterly email updates, and holding at least four open public meetings.

Task 3: Site Assessment (QEP responsibility) – Activities will include producing a Programmatic Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), completing 22 Phase I assessments (12 hazardous substance, 10 petroleum) and 15 Phase II assessments (3 hazardous substance priority sites, 6 additional hazardous substance sites, 3 priority petroleum sites, 3 additional petroleum sites). Assessment of the former Davidson Exterior Trim will be the largest effort, followed by the former Perlis Truck Stop. Each Phase II assessment listed above will include a Sampling & Analysis Plan (SAP), Health and Safety Plan (HASP), and Report of Findings.

Task 4: Cleanup Planning (QEP responsibility) – It is anticipated that nine cleanup planning documents will be produced (5 hazardous substance, 4 petroleum). Activities will include comparing the site data with cleanup standards, identifying cleanup options and costs, and completion of Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA) for the investigated properties.

Proposed schedule and milestones for assessment grant activities include finalizing an EPA-approved Work Plan in October 2019. By the end of 2019, we will procure QEP services, get eligibility for priority sites, and complete a QAPP. In Q1 2020, we will begin assessment planning for the priority sites and implement assessment at the priority sites in Q2 2020. After priority site work is complete, we will have more than two years to produce the additional Phase I and Phase II assessments and develop cleanup planning documents. We believe the proposed schedule is achievable and realistic.

#### **b. Cost Estimates and Outputs**

The table on Page 8 shows the grant budget by task. Approximately 86% of the grant funding is proposed for Phase I and II site assessments. Rationale for each budget category is presented below by Task and specifies the percentage (%) of overall grant budget, itemizes Personnel Costs and Contractual Costs, and identifies the Outputs with an asterisk (\*).

Task 1: Program Management (5%). Personnel Costs: 537.4 hours at \$60.33 per hour = \$32,421 for one QEP contract\*, 22 site eligibility questionnaires\*, 12 quarterly reports\*, one final Status Report\*, and access on at least 22 sites\*. ACRES updates with each status report (22 new sites added to ACRES\*, including the 6 priority sites, 9 additional hazardous materials sites, and 7 additional petroleum sites. In

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addition to the deliverables above, Program Management will also include monthly strategy meetings with the QEP and Coalition members, quarterly progress meetings with the EPA, and interface with the RVRC Planning Department.

PROJECT BUDGET					
Budget Categories	Project Tasks				
	1: General Programmatic	2: Community Outreach	3: Site Assessment	4: Cleanup Planning	Total
<b>Personnel</b>					
Hazardous Substance	\$11,500	\$2,400	\$0	\$0	<b>\$13,900</b>
Petroleum	\$8,500	\$2,300	\$0	\$0	<b>\$10,800</b>
<b>Fringe Benefits<sup>1</sup></b>					
Hazardous Substance	\$5,417	\$849	\$0	\$0	<b>\$6,266</b>
Petroleum	\$4,004	\$814	\$0	\$0	<b>\$4,818</b>
<b>Travel<sup>2</sup></b>					
Hazardous Substance	\$1,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$1,500</b>
Petroleum	\$1,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$1,500</b>
<b>(No Equipment or Supplies will be purchased with the assessment grant)</b>					
<b>Contractual</b>					
Hazardous Substance	\$0	\$6,000	\$305,950	\$19,340	<b>\$331,290</b>
Petroleum	\$0	\$4,800	\$209,798	\$15,328	<b>\$229,926</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>					
Hazardous Substance	<b>\$18,417</b>	<b>\$9,249</b>	<b>\$305,950</b>	<b>\$19,340</b>	<b>\$352,956</b>
Petroleum	<b>\$14,004</b>	<b>\$7,914</b>	<b>\$209,798</b>	<b>\$15,328</b>	<b>\$247,044</b>
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>\$32,421</b>	<b>\$17,163</b>	<b>\$515,748</b>	<b>\$34,668</b>	<b>\$600,000</b>

<sup>1</sup>Fringe calculated at 47%. <sup>2</sup>Travel for brownfield-related conferences and community outreach meetings.

**Task 2: Community Outreach (3%).** Personnel Costs: 105.5 hours at \$60.33 per hour = \$10,742 to conduct three annual RVRC Commission presentations\*, present 15 draft SAPs and 6 cleanup plans to the applicable local government council\*, update our website to discuss Brownfields\*, send quarterly email updates\*, and hold four additional open public meetings\*. Contractual Costs: 9 fact sheets\* at \$600 each = \$5,400, 4 in-person public meeting presentations\* at \$1,100 each = \$4,400, remote presentation to 4 additional meetings\* at approx. \$250 each = \$1,000.

**Task 3: Site Assessment (86%).** Contractual Costs: one programmatic QAPP\* (\$4,000), 22 Phase I assessments\* at \$3,000 each = \$66,000 (12 hazardous substance, 10 petroleum), 15 Phase II Assessments\* at approximately \$29,716 each = \$445,748 (9 hazardous substance, 6 petroleum) Note that Phase II costs are an average, and will be higher at large priority sites like the Davidson Exterior Trim and Perlis Truck Stop properties and lower at smaller priority sites including the Ideal School and Allied Department store. Each Phase II assessment includes SAP, HASP, and Report of Findings. To keep costs of building materials assessments low, we will produce a standardized Guide to summarize testing frequencies and techniques. As an additional cost saving approach, we will use dynamic work strategies in our SAPs to ensure that the extent of contamination is determined under one field mobilization, where possible.

**Task 4: Cleanup Planning (6%).** Contractual Costs: 9 cleanup planning documents\* (5 hazardous substances, 4 petroleum), with a cost of approximately \$3,850 each.

**c. Measuring Environmental Results**

RVRC's Environmental Planner, Laura Schneider, will track Outputs from the assessment grant, measure the pace of activities (such as sites addressed per year), and evaluate if additional outreach is

## **RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION: BROWNFIELDS COALITION ASSESSMENT GRANT PROPOSAL, FY 2019**

needed to meet all goals in the grant period. At least twice per year, Ms. Schneider will have a strategy meeting with the QEP, coalition members, and EPA to present her evaluation of progress, and set Output goals for the upcoming 6 months. Schedule milestones are as follows for the Outputs under each Task. For *Task 1: Project Management*, QEP contract and completed site eligibility for each priority site are anticipated in Q4 2019, status reports with ACRES updates will be submitted quarterly, and final project summary will be within 60 days of the end of the grant. For *Task 2: Community Outreach*, we will present annually to the RVRC Commission, hold at least one open public meeting per year, send out quarterly email updates, and meet with stakeholders in the applicable cities/towns prior to approval of each SAP or cleanup plan. For *Task 3: Site Assessment*, we will conduct approximately 7 Phase I assessments per year, complete assessment on the applicable priority sites (Ideal School, Allied Dept. Store, Davidson Exterior Trim, Montezuma Motors, G-S Gas Station, Perlis Truck Stop) by end of Q4 2020, and will have 2 remaining years to complete 9 additional Phase II assessments. For *Task 4: Cleanup Planning*, we will produce three cleanup planning documents per year.

If goals are set twice-per-year and coordinate closely with the EPA Brownfields Program and the QEP, the following Outcomes will be achieved: 1- the safe demolition of the Ideal School, followed by expanding the adjacent park or attracting a housing developer interested in the property. 2- At the Allied Department Store, assessment will clear the building for development into a café or coffee shop. 3- Assessment of the Davidson Exterior Trim factory will allow the City of Americus and the property owner to immediately begin marketing the building to interested industries. 4- The demolition of the Montezuma Motors building will remove a blighted building and safety hazard while restoring the historic charm of downtown Montezuma. Above all, the RVRC Commission and coalition partners will recognize that addressing brownfields is an excellent way to address underutilized property and blight.

### **PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE**

#### **d. Programmatic Capability**

##### **i. Organizational Structure**

Since 2009, RVRC has successfully managed millions of dollars in both federal and state grants from HUD, Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Georgia DOT, and others. Currently, the RVRC administers 54 federal grant programs, including 21 open and active CDBG projects. RVRC's structure for Brownfields grant-funded projects includes a Project Coordinator as well as a grant administrator. Mr. Jim Livingston, Director of Community and Economic Development, will serve as the Project Coordinator. Mr. Livingston is responsible for oversight of staff that administers the 21 CDBG projects as well as the federal EDA Planning Grant. Mr. Livingston will perform grant management and reporting activities, and direct and review costs expended by the Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) on the project. Mr. Livingston has been with RVRC for 5 years. Prior to joining RVRC, Mr. Livingston was a Principal at Community Greens, providing strategic consulting to communities, towns, and cities on issues of community and economic development. Mr. Livingston has a M.A. in Political Science from the University of Florida and a B.A. in History from Davidson College.

Mr. Livingston will manage the assessment grant in collaboration with Laura Schneider. Ms. Schneider serves as Environmental Planner for the RVRC and is responsible for monitoring and testing the Pataula and Kinchafoonee Creek watersheds in the region for Georgia EPD. Laura has a B.S. in Environmental Science from Columbus State University. In the unlikely event of employee turnover, RVRC has 6 other staff experienced in grant management and economic development that could successfully carryout management of the grant. RVRC will select a QEP to assist with community outreach and conduct assessments and cleanup planning, and will procure the QEP in accordance with state and federal laws contained in 40 CFR 30.40 through 30.48.

## ***RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION: BROWNFIELDS COALITION ASSESSMENT GRANT PROPOSAL, FY 2019***

The Coalition members will hold quarterly meetings to review progress of the project and prioritize sites for assessment. Our process to prioritize use of assessment grant funds will be through presentation by the landowner or local redevelopment advocate, followed by discussion and vote of our coalition members. Many property owners within the target area, including all of our priority sites, have already expressed an interest in having assessments conducted on their property. In the first meeting, coalition members will develop a formalized strategy for prioritizing sites, arranging legal access agreements with landowners, and begin the QEP solicitation process. Coalition letters of support are included as Attachment B.

### **ii. Acquiring Additional Resources**

Staff have a long-standing track record of successfully procuring contractors, and we will procure a QEP to assist with community outreach, conduct assessments, and cleanup planning. Competitive procurement of a QEP in accordance with 40 CFR 30.40 through 30.48, and to involve Senior oversight in contracting will occur. Successful procurement system is evidenced by the fact that none of the grants RVRC manages has received a negative audit finding.

### **e. Past Performance and Accomplishments**

#### **i. Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant but has Received Other Federal Assistance Agreements**

RVRC has not previously received an EPA Brownfields grant, but has received over \$5 million in Federal and non-federal grant funds annually. The RVRC also administers federal funds for our local governments through the CDBG program. Some of the grants and accomplishments are listed below.

*Accomplishments:* A summary of RVRC's grant successes reported is provided below:

US DOT and GA DOT (\$310,000): Using grant funds, Columbus and Americus, GA both recently implemented a Complete Streets ordinance. Safe Route to School analyses have been completed, ensuring daily safe trips to school for our area children. One area school constructed grant-funded bicycle facilities as a result of a Safe Route to School plan prepared by RVRC.

WIOA (\$878,000): Since the grant was awarded in 2014, over 415 people have received education/training services, including 193 currently in service. Of these, 84% who were WIOA participants entered employment, and 99.6% of those who found employment remained employed 6 months later.

Area Agency on Aging (\$3,233,000): AAA served more than 206,000 meals at 12 senior centers and through home deliveries. They also discussed options for seniors and care givers with more than 4,500 callers looking for assistance.

Georgia EPD (\$557,000): RVRC eradicated 624 feral hogs along the Pennahatchee Creek, a tributary to the Flint River to address high levels of fecal coliform in the watershed. The RVRC worked with landowners to install Best Management Practices in the region, and wrote and distributed the Georgia Landowners Guide to Wild Pig Management. The RVRC also hosted a workshop for Adopt-A-Stream.

Economic Development Administration (\$236,000): As a part of the CEDS, the RVRC has assisted with the opening of ColumbusMakesIT, a makerspace recognized by the White House in 2015 as an example of national innovation possible through the maker movement. The RVRC has also organized and held quarterly meetings of county agents responsible for maintaining Georgia's Camera Ready database.

*Compliance with Grant Requirements:* RVRC has properly managed the federal and non-federal grants listed above, totaling over \$5,000,000, while complying with all grant requirements.

## **ATTACHMENT A**

### Threshold Criteria

## ATTACHMENT A

### Threshold Criteria

#### 1. **Applicant Eligibility:**

The River Valley Brownfields Coalition consists of the lead applicant River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC), as well as the Crisp-Cordele Industrial Development Authority, the City of Vienna, Macon County Development Authority, and the Sumter County Development Authority. RVRC was created from the merger of the Lower Chattahoochee Regional Development Center and the Middle Flint Regional Development Center effective July 1, 2009 under the 2009 Georgia Planning Act. The Regional Development Centers were “created and established as public agencies and instrumentalities of their members which shall facilitate coordinated and comprehensive planning in conformity with the minimum standards and procedures established pursuant to law” as outlined in Article 2 of the 1989 Georgia Planning Act.

The Sumter County Development Authority was created in 1962 through an amendment to the Georgia state Constitution. The Cordele-Crisp Industrial Development Authority was created in 1968 through an amendment to the state Constitution. The Macon County Development Authority was created through a county resolution, adopted on August 21, 1997. Documentation of threshold eligibility is attached to this criteria.

As a General Purpose Unit of local government, the City of Vienna is an eligible applicant for an EPA Brownfields Assessment grant.

#### 2. **Community Involvement:**

Through its development of the 2012-2032 Regional Plan, RVRC has demonstrated significant community involvement experience throughout the target area. As a part of the Regional Plan, RVRC developed a stakeholder involvement plan, which is “**designed to encourage as much public participation, open dialogue, and communication as possible**” to achieve community consensus and agreement. The plan identifies key stakeholders in the target area, participation techniques, and partnership techniques. This framework will be utilized for assessment grant outreach activities. Additionally, coalition members live and work in the target area and are connected to a number of local community organizations. For this project, RVRC will draw on previous community involvement experience utilized in other managed grants. Community engagement will include:

*Community Engagement Plan-* A Community Engagement and Education plan will be developed within three months of a Cooperative Agreement to guide community participation and address community goals. Outreach efforts will focus on **educating** the public about the project, **involving** the public in the site assessment process including soliciting input on sites for assessment, **providing** community stakeholders with information and updates about specific sites, and providing a forum to address concerns regarding contamination found at specific sites. Educational fact sheets will be

developed to describe assessment findings. A one-page fact sheet has already been developed for RVBC's assessment application. The plan will define outputs and milestones for public outreach and will be approved by the Coalition members.

Meetings- RVRC, Coalition members, and the selected QEP contractor will hold at least **four** community meetings per year to **solicit** input on potential brownfield sites, **describe** assessment findings, and **involve** the public in decisions concerning sites selected for assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment. Participants will be informed of assessment results, cleanup options, and potential redevelopment plans. The RVBC will conduct other meetings with landowners and developers to discuss assessments, cleanup, and redevelopment potential of specific properties, and determine how to best use Brownfields funds. Coalition members have presented information to and sought input on potential project sites from attendees at **a Macon County Kiwanis meeting, a meeting of regional leaders discussing the creation of a multi-county land bank program, and at the Big Pig Jig, the largest festival held in Dooly County and one of the largest barbeque competitions in the southeast.**

News and Social Media- RVRC will invite the press to public meetings and create press releases for local newspapers. RVRC has an active social media presence, and will post fact sheets, meeting notices, and other brownfields information on its social media networks.

### **3. Expenditure of Assessment Grant Funds:**

This is not applicable. The RVRC and the coalition members do not have an active EPA Brownfields Assessment Grant.



## Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

\* 1. Type of Submission:

- ☐ Preapplication  
☒ Application  
☐ Changed/Corrected Application

\* 2. Type of Application:

- ☒ New  
☐ Continuation  
☐ Revision

\* If Revision, select appropriate letter(s):

\* Other (Specify):

\* 3. Date Received:

01/31/2019

4. Applicant Identifier:

5a. Federal Entity Identifier:

5b. Federal Award Identifier:

State Use Only:

6. Date Received by State:

7. State Application Identifier:

### 8. APPLICANT INFORMATION:

\* a. Legal Name: River Valley Regional Commission

\* b. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN):

27-0432727

\* c. Organizational DUNS:

1510146020000

### d. Address:

\* Street1:

PO Box 1908

Street2:

\* City:

Columbus

County/Parish:

GA

\* State:

GA: Georgia

Province:

\* Country:

USA: UNITED STATES

\* Zip / Postal Code:

31902-1908

### e. Organizational Unit:

Department Name:

Division Name:

### f. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application:

Prefix:

\* First Name:

James

Middle Name:

\* Last Name:

Livingston

Suffix:

Title:

Organizational Affiliation:

\* Telephone Number:

7062562910

Fax Number:

\* Email: jllivingston@rivervalleyrc.org

## Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

### \* 9. Type of Applicant 1: Select Applicant Type:

E: Regional Organization

Type of Applicant 2: Select Applicant Type:

Type of Applicant 3: Select Applicant Type:

\* Other (specify):

### \* 10. Name of Federal Agency:

Environmental Protection Agency

### 11. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:

66.818

CFDA Title:

Brownfields Assessment and Cleanup Cooperative Agreements

### \* 12. Funding Opportunity Number:

EPA-OLEM-OBLR-18-06

\* Title:

FY19 GUIDELINES FOR BROWNFIELDS ASSESSMENT GRANTS

### 13. Competition Identification Number:

Title:

### 14. Areas Affected by Project (Cities, Counties, States, etc.):

Add Attachment

Delete Attachment

View Attachment

### \* 15. Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project:

River Valley Brownfields Coalition proposal for brownfields coalition assessment grant funds. The coalition has River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC) as the lead eligible entity.

Attach supporting documents as specified in agency instructions.

Add Attachments

Delete Attachments

View Attachments

**Application for Federal Assistance SF-424****16. Congressional Districts Of:**\* a. Applicant \* b. Program/Project 

Attach an additional list of Program/Project Congressional Districts if needed.

**17. Proposed Project:**\* a. Start Date: \* b. End Date: **18. Estimated Funding (\$):**

* a. Federal	<input type="text" value="600,000.00"/>
* b. Applicant	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* c. State	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* d. Local	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* e. Other	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* f. Program Income	<input type="text" value="0.00"/>
* g. TOTAL	<input type="text" value="600,000.00"/>

**\* 19. Is Application Subject to Review By State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?**

- ☒ a. This application was made available to the State under the Executive Order 12372 Process for review on .
- ☐ b. Program is subject to E.O. 12372 but has not been selected by the State for review.
- ☐ c. Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.

**\* 20. Is the Applicant Delinquent On Any Federal Debt? (If "Yes," provide explanation in attachment.)**☐ Yes ☒ No

If "Yes", provide explanation and attach

**21. \*By signing this application, I certify (1) to the statements contained in the list of certifications\*\* and (2) that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances\*\* and agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept an award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 218, Section 1001)**

☒ \*\* I AGREE

\*\* The list of certifications and assurances, or an internet site where you may obtain this list, is contained in the announcement or agency specific instructions.

**Authorized Representative:**

Prefix:  \* First Name:

Middle Name:

\* Last Name:

Suffix:

\* Title: \* Telephone Number:  Fax Number: \* Email: \* Signature of Authorized Representative:  \* Date Signed: